

How to create a default user profile in Windows 7

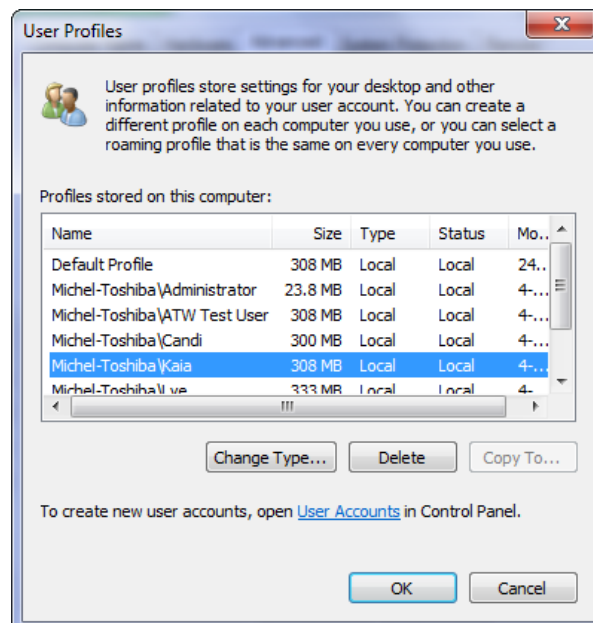
When to use this document

Use this document whenever you want to create a default user profile which has all your favourite software programs preconfigured, all your favourite utilities installed and configured with your own preferences, etc...

A typical use of this document would be in a corporate environment where you want all users of a PC to have all programs behaving identically across all profiles, all printers installed in the same way, all required toolbars installed and configured according to your corporate standards, etc..

Alternatively you may be a home user where, again, you want all your family members to enjoy the benefit of all programs having been configured properly beforehand.

Problem : creating a default user profile in Windows 7 is completely different to the way it used to be in either Windows XP or Windows Vista. The **copy-configured-user-profile-to-DEFAULT-profile** method using the *User Profiles* section of the Advanced System Properties dialogue screen, does NOT work. Basically the **“Copy to ...”** button is always disabled, as illustrated in the screenshot below :



It is maddening - “**Copy to ...**” is always disabled. This is very poor from Microsoft – a number of people in Quality Control missed this one completely and should have been sacked ! How else can you explain the next problem : not only is the **Copy To** button never enabled, but, to make matters worse, the Microsoft solution to the problem, Knowledge Base article 973289, is ridiculous and nonsensical. How can anyone in Quality Control think that it is right to replace what used to be a 2-minute procedure in Windows XP / Vista, with a 2-hour process involving the Windows 7 SYSPREP tool. The mind boggles !

Fortunately, we are AnswersThatWork.com, not Microsoft, and we have for you a 3-minute procedure which brings sanity back into this process – read on.

Configure the profile you will be using as your template for the Default User Profile

Make sure you are logged in with a profile that is an **Administrator** on the PC. Then :

- Do yourself a favour and download the free **Classic Shell for Windows 7** from the following web page : <http://classicshell.sourceforge.net>. While Windows 7 itself is excellent, after the unbelievably terrible Vista – the worst operating system ever invented – the Windows 7 Start Menu, on the other hand, is terrible, so make sure you install Classic Shell to bring back Start Menu **user friendliness**.
- Install all the programs that will be needed on a standard user PC.
- Configure networking.
- Install network printers.
- Choose your standard default printer and configure the printer defaults that you want your users to have (e.g. Tray 2 as default tray, double-sided printing, etc..).
- Map network shares (unless this is done by server-side login scripts or group policies).
- Install all Windows Updates (don't forget the Optional Updates).
- Install all add-on utilities such as Adobe Acrobat Reader, Flash, and Shockwave.
- Install your favourite picture viewers.
- Install and configure your corporate antivirus software.
- Configure your **START** menu.
- Configure toolbars (Quick Launch, Word, Excel, etc..).
- Configure Internet Explorer and other web browser defaults (we have excellent documents for this on our website in the Library of Answers That Work).
- **Run TUT**, a must, www.TheUltimateTroubleshooter.com, to optimize your Windows 7 setup.

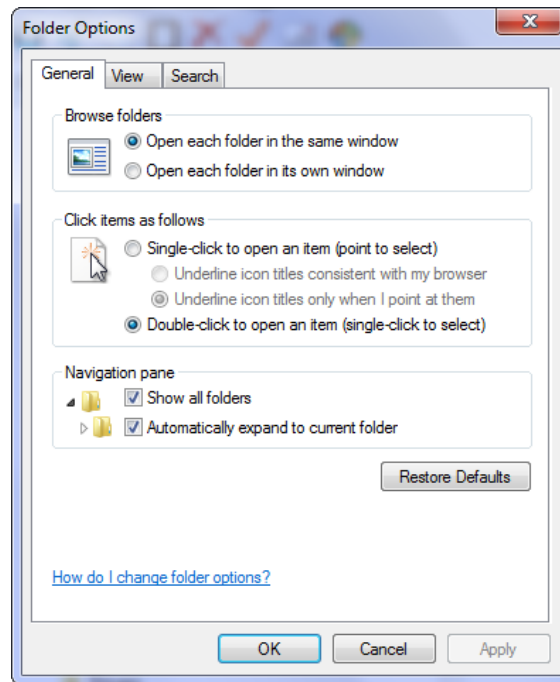
- Install your corporate templates and point Word, Excel, PowerPoint to the default network drives and folders.
- **Open all programs so that users are not faced with first-run Licence Agreements and setup wizards** the first time they use a newly set-up PC (and that includes utilities like Acrobat Reader, iTunes, etc....) !!!!
- Disable automatic updates that you do not want users to be faced with (e.g. Acrobat Reader, Flash, Windows ?, ...).
- Set up your corporate preferred **Taskbar notification** preferences.
- Set up your corporate preferred **Auto-Play** preferences.
- Set up your corporate preferred **Notification Icons** preferences
- Finally, delete all the files in **C:\Users**
- Empty your Recycle Bin

Now create the Default Profile

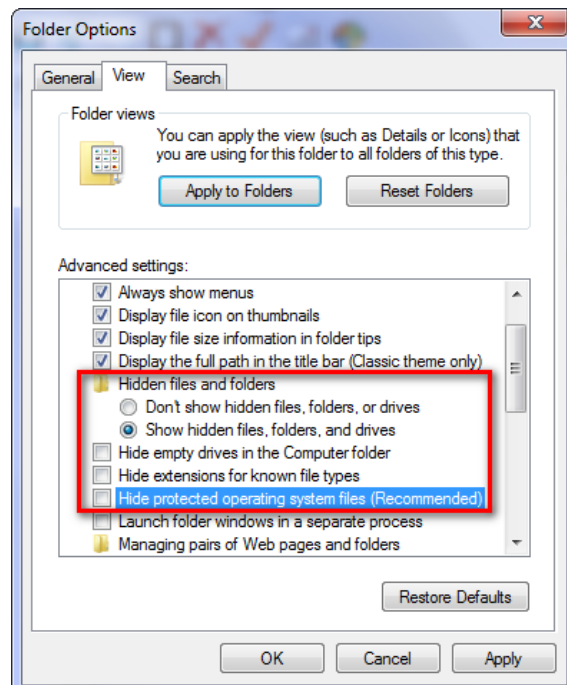
Now that you have finished configuring a profile exactly as you want every user to have as their default profile, it is time to copy this profile to the Default User Profile that all users will be using. For the examples in this document we will assume that the profile we configured to become the default profile, was that of a user called **Kaia**.

- Logout of *Kaia* and **Reboot the PC** (not a "logoff", a full reboot).
- Log back into the PC as another Administrator user, e.g. **Administrator**.
- Open **Windows Explorer**.
- Go into **Tools \ Options**.

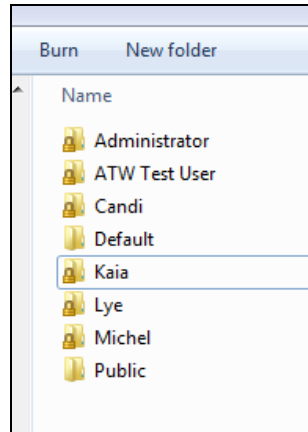
- Configure the **General** tab as below (make sure to Apply your changes) :



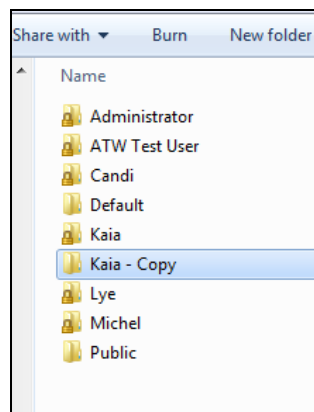
- Configure the **View** tab as follows (make sure to Apply the changes) :



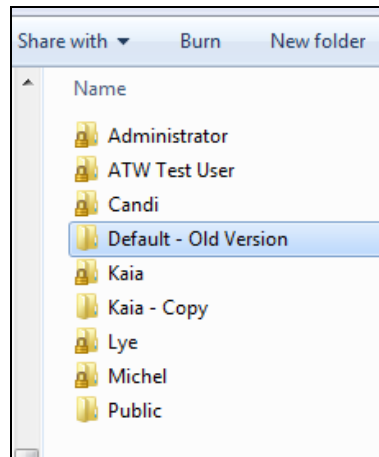
- ☐ **OK** your way out.
- ☐ Whilst still in Windows Explorer home in on the **C:\Users** folder. The folders you will find in there will be something like this :



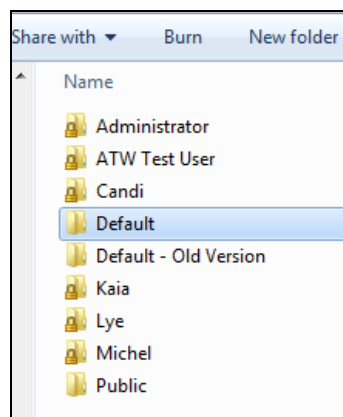
- ☐ Right-click on **Kaia** (our fully configured profile) and choose COPY.
- ☐ Next, PASTE back into the same **C:\Users** folder. You should end up with two **Kaia** folders, one of them being a copy of the original, as shown below :



- Next, rename the **Default** folder to something which indicates that it is a backup of your last Default User Profile, as per the example below :



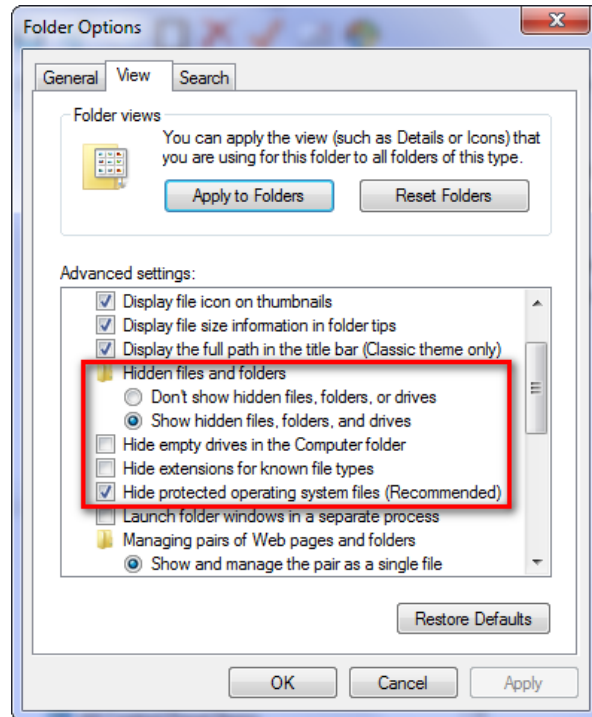
- Finally, rename “**Kaia – Copy**” to **Default**.



- **That's it – Job done !!!**

A copy of the **Kaia** user profile which you configured carefully over many hours, is now in the **Default** folder. From now on, when a new user of this PC logs on for the first time, Windows 7 will create that user's new profile using all your carefully configured preferences stored in the **Default** user profile.

- All you now need to do is tidy up. Go back into **Tools \ Options** in Windows Explorer and set some of the options back, for safety, as follows :



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